

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel having comprising:

a padding (24);

a grip surface (27) at least partly covering the latter, padding; and

a heating element (4) arranged between the padding (24) and the grip surface (27), and the heating element comprising an electrically conductive layer (41) with a meandering contour along a lengthwise direction of ~~lengthwise extent~~ of the heating element (4), ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the heating element (4) is cropped from ~~an endless~~ a substantially continuous segment and ~~in that~~ wherein the electrically conductive layer, (41) at its apical segments, (45) is widened in each instance compared to a connecting segment (48).

2. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the electrically conductive layer (41) is an integral constituent of the heating element (4) ~~exhibiting a meandering contour.~~

3. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the meandering contour of the heating element (4) includes an undulating profile.

4. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the meandering contour of the heating element (4) includes a rectangular, saw tooth or triangular profile.

5. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~, ~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein apical segments (45) of the electrically conductive layer (41) ~~running in a meandering contour, and/or or~~ the heating element (4), comprise a rounding radius (46).

6. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the~~ claim 1, wherein an envelope of the apical segments (45) arranged on one side of the direction of lengthwise extension of the heating element (4) overlap, said apical segments (45) ~~themselves~~ each remaining distanced from each other.

7. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that the~~ claim 1, wherein envelopes of the apical segments (45) arranged on either side of the direction of lengthwise extension of the heating element (4) are distanced from each other.

8. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein a heating element (4) runs around the entire circumference of the steering wheel.

9. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the heating element (4) runs around a peripheral segment of the steering wheel (2), cutting out a lower segment (28) between preferred hand grip positions (25, 26).

10. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that~~ claim 1, comprising two heating elements (4) ~~are provided~~, each arranged in a circumferential segment of a preferred hand grip position (25, 26).

11. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the heating element (4) comprises at least two layers (41, 42) connected to each other.

12. (currently amended) ~~Steering~~ A steering wheel according to claim 11, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the electrically conductive layer (41) is applied to an insulating support layer (42) and connected thereto.

13. (currently amended) ~~Steering~~ A steering wheel according to claim ~~11 or 12~~, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the insulating support layer (42) ~~consists is~~ made of synthetic material[[, in particular polyurethane foam]].

14. (currently amended) ~~Steering~~ A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the electrically conductive layer (41) comprises copper or a copper alloy[[, in particular a copper alloy containing tin]].

15. (currently amended) ~~Steering~~ A steering wheel according to ~~any of claims 1 to 13, characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the electrically conductive layer (41) comprises aluminum ~~and/or or~~ an aluminum alloy.

16. (currently amended) ~~Steering~~ A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that claim 12, wherein~~ the electrically conductive layer (41) is vapor deposited on the insulating support layer (42).

17. (currently amended) ~~Steering~~ A steering wheel according to ~~any of claims 1 to 15, characterized in that claim 12, wherein~~ the electrically conductive layer (41) is applied to the insulating support layer (42) galvanically or by sputtering.

18. (currently amended) ~~Steering~~ A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the electrically conductive layer (41) comprises a greater thickness of material ~~of metallization of the electrically conductive layer (41)~~ at each of its apical segments (45) than the ~~linear or slightly curved~~ connecting segments (28).

19. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the electrically conductive layer (41) comprises ~~several~~ a plurality contacting locations ~~(43)~~ for connection of supply lines ~~(61)~~.

20. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to claim 19, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the contacting locations ~~(43)~~ each comprise a thickening in the form of a widening ~~and/or or~~ or a greater thickness of material of ~~the metallization of the electrically conductive layer (41)~~.

21. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to claim 19, wherein the ~~or 20, characterized in that each~~ heating element (4) comprises two electric contactings ~~(6)~~.

22. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to claim 21, ~~characterized in that wherein,~~ at each electric contacting, ~~(6)~~ an electrically conductive cable connection ~~(62)~~ is provided.

23. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to claim 21 ~~or 22, characterized in that wherein~~ the contactings ~~(6)~~ are made in the form of riveted, soldered, bonded or welded connections.

24. (cancelled)

25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to ~~any of the preceding claims, characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the heating element (4) is bonded under the outer grip surface ~~(27)~~ of the steering wheel (2) onto the padding or foaming ~~(24)~~ of ~~the~~ a steering wheel rim ~~(21)~~.

27. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that claim 1, wherein the heating element (4) is bonded onto an inside of the outer grip surface (27) of the steering wheel [(2),] which is applied to the padding or foaming (24) of the a steering wheel rim (21).

28. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the claim 1, wherein an outer grip surface (27) comprises essentially natural or artificial leather.

29. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of claims 11 to 28, characterized in that claim 12, wherein the insulating support layer (42) comprises a thickness of material between 30 and 200 microns.

30. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of claims 11 to 28, characterized in that claim 12, wherein the insulating support layer (42) comprises a thickness of material between 50 and 80 microns.

31. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of claims 11 to 30, characterized in that claim 11, wherein the electrically conductive layer (41) comprises a thickness of material of about 50 microns maximum.

32. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of claims 11 to 30, characterized in that claim 11, wherein the electrically conductive layer (41) comprises a thickness of material of about 20 microns maximum.

33. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of claims 11 to 30, characterized in that claim 11, wherein the electrically conductive layer (41) comprises a thickness of material of about 10 microns maximum.

34. (currently amended) Steering A steering wheel according to any of the preceding claims, characterized in that claim 1, wherein the heating element

(4) is adapted to a ~~preassigned~~ predetermined diameter and a ~~preassigned~~ thickness of the a steering wheel rim.

35. (cancelled)

36. (new) An electrically heatable steering wheel for a vehicle comprising:

a padding;

a grip surface at least partly covering the padding; and

a heating element arranged between the padding and the grip surface, the heating element comprising an electrically conductive layer with a meandering contour along a lengthwise direction of the heating element and applied to an insulating support layer, the electrically conductive layer including alternating apical segments and connecting segments, the apical segments being wider or thicker than the connecting segments,

wherein the heating element runs around at least a peripheral segment of the steering wheel and wherein the meandering contour is substantially continuous and repeating.

37. (new) A heating element for a vehicle steering wheel comprising:

an electrically conductive layer with a meandering contour along a lengthwise direction of the heating element and applied to an insulating support layer, the electrically conductive layer including alternating apical segments and connecting segments, the apical segments being wider or thicker than the connecting segments,

wherein the meandering contour is formed as a substantially continuous segment such that heating element segments can be cropped therefrom.